

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 17, 2016

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4909) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (H.R. 4909).

Each year, the National Defense Authorization Act provides a framework for our armed forces in the fiscal year ahead. Crafting and considering this legislation is a serious matter, one that has earned strong bipartisan support in the past. This year, House Republicans have instead decided to intentionally violate last year's Bipartisan Budget Act and abdicate this Congress' solemn responsibility to sufficiently fund our troops.

H.R. 4909 takes \$18 billion from Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO), the account that pays for our country's fight against ISIS and other important military efforts, in order to fund base budget items that the President and the Department of Defense have not requested. This funding shift breaks the spirit of the Bipartisan Budget Act reached last October and degrades our military's readiness. Furthermore, H.R. 4909 stops authorization for OCO funding next April, long before the fiscal year ends, and places our servicemen and -women squarely in the middle of a partisan budget fight just months into the next president's term. This is reckless and irresponsible, and Congress owes it to our troops to authorize a full year of funding.

H.R. 4909 also includes several disturbing Republican ideological stances that I find highly objectionable. This legislation fails to uphold President Obama's protections for LGBT Americans who work for federal contractors and grantees and allows for discrimination against them. This outrageous partisan rider has absolutely no place in a bill that authorizes the funds necessary for our servicemen and -women to do the jobs they have bravely volunteered to do. Additionally, H.R. 4909 once again includes provisions that prevent President Obama from responsibly closing the prison at Guantanamo Bay, ensuring that the detention center will remain an extremist propaganda tool and a threat to our national security. Now that President Obama has put forward a plan to close the detention center responsibly, Congress should move immediately to enact it. The closure of this facility is long overdue.

House Republicans owe it to our servicemen and -women to put forward legislation free from partisan ideological riders and adequately funds them for a full fiscal year. Unfortunately, H.R. 4909 falls far short of this.

quately funds them for a full fiscal year. Unfortunately, H.R. 4909 falls far short of this.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (H.R. 4909).

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017

SPEECH OF

HON. SUZANNE BONAMICI

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4974) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes:

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Chair, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 4974, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2017.

Although I strongly support the bill's funding for programs that support our nation's service members and veterans, the legislation contained too many harmful provisions to earn my vote. Regrettably, the bill included language allowing federal contractors to discriminate against LGBT employees, as well as language to prevent the closing of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay. I was also concerned by the adoption of anti-labor amendments that will jeopardize the rights of workers on military construction projects.

Though I oppose the final bill for those reasons, there were several provisions in the legislation that I support, including greater investments in providing care to our veterans, and funding for military housing, infrastructure, and other services to give our men and women in uniform and their families the facilities and care they deserve. I hope to work with my colleagues to improve this legislation as the appropriations process continues.

DEMOCRACY IN CRISIS

SPEECH OF

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2016

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise with my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus to urge our Republican colleagues to stop their reckless assault on the right to vote in America.

First, let me thank my colleagues, Congresswoman JOYCE BEATTY and Congressman HAKEEM JEFFRIES, for organizing this important special order and for their dedicated leadership in ensuring equality and liberty for all.

I'd also like to thank Chairman G. K. BUTTERFIELD for his mighty leadership of our caucus as we work to ensure all Americans have an equal voice at the ballot box.

At the signing of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, President Johnson told the American people: "The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison men because they are different from other men."

And Dr. King, our drum major for peace and justice, agreed saying: "Voting is the foundation stone for political action."

I am proud to say that we have come a long way in the 50 years since the signing of the Voting Rights Act. In April, the Supreme Court unanimously upheld "one person one vote" with its 8-0 ruling, in *Evenwel v. Abbott*. The ruling affirmed that legislative districts must continue to be drawn based on total population, not just the total number of voters. This will ensure that the concerns of all constituents will be equally represented.

However, we must confront the fact that our voting rights are once again under attack. There are many working to turn back the clock, so we must continue working to ensure that each man and woman has an equal voice at the ballot box.

We cannot allow the victories of the Civil Rights Movement to be undone.

In 2013, the Supreme Court opened the door to these voting rights attacks. In its *Shelby v. Holder* decision, the Court carelessly and callously gutted the milestone the Voting Rights Act.

In the three years following this ruling, we've watched Republican state legislatures fall over themselves to erect new and undemocratic barriers to the ballot box.

This year, 16 states instituted new restrictions for the first time.

Let me repeat—for the first time, during a presidential election year, 16 states instituted new voting restrictions. And the clearly partisan nature of these voting rights attacks is not lost on the American people.

These new barriers range from unnecessary voter ID laws, to ending same-day voter registration and reducing or completing eliminating early voting.

Since 2010, 21 states have implemented new restrictions.

Mr. Speaker, this is a crisis; our democracy is in crisis.

While states have put up barriers, Speaker RYAN, Judiciary Chairman GOODLATTE and some Congressional Republicans have ignored the clear, bipartisan conscience to fix the Voting Rights Act and restore voting rights protections for all Americans.

Republican Congressman JAMES SENSENBRENNER has introduced the bipartisan Voting Rights Amendment Act (H.R. 885), which I am proud to co-sponsor with 105 of my colleagues, including 14 Republican Members representing 11 different states.

But let me be clear—simply fixing the Voting Rights Act is not enough.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

We need to empower voters and Congresswoman SEWELL'S bill—the Voting Rights Advancement Act (H.R. 2867)—would do just that.

Now—we often talk about how states in the south like Alabama have laws threatening voting rights. But this is still an issue around the country, including in California.

While California has implemented many policies that improve access to the ballot box, including vote-by-mail, automatic voter registration and expanded absentee voting—we are not perfect.

Three California counties—Kings County, Monterey County and Yuba County—were covered by the section 5 of the Voting Rights Act before the Shelby decision—meaning they needed preclearance from the Justice Department before changing voting rules or jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, we must restore the preclearance process to prevent voter discrimination and disenfranchisement before it happens—not after.

It is clear—our democracy is in a crisis. There is an assault against voting rights and we must come together to stop it.

My Democratic colleagues and the Congressional Black Caucus are serious about protecting voting rights and pass the Voting Rights Advancement Act. It is past time that all Republicans in Congress join our efforts to protect the foundation of our democracy: the right to vote.

Our work is not over until the voice of EVERY American is equally heard.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017

SPEECH OF

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 24, 2016

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5055) making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes:

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chair, let me thank the Ranking Member and Chair for including language to recognize the importance of workplace diversity in the Department of Energy's National Laboratories and directing the Department to provide a detailed plan on the recruitment and retention with minority-serving institutions, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

I am also pleased that the bill includes language on Energy-Water Nexus initiative that I worked on with our Ranking Member MARCY KAPTUR. This language encourages the Department of Energy to enter into an agreement with the Department of Agriculture at various national labs to work on development of affordable and efficient food production systems for our most food insecure communities. This is a critical step towards addressing food insecurity and poverty.

Lastly, I'm pleased that the Advanced Light Source program is fully funded in this bill at the level of \$64.95 million in FY2017. This \$2

million increase over FY 2016 enacted levels will ensure that these facilities remain fully operational, including the Advanced Light Source and Molecular Foundry at Lawrence Berkeley National Lab in my home district.

However, I remain deeply concerned regarding the many poison pill policy riders and low funding levels included in this spending bill.

We know that California is experiencing an unprecedented drought coupled with the real effects of climate change. The fact that most of H.R. 2898, the Western Water and American Food Security Act of 2015, has shamefully been inserted into this bill is a disgrace. This harmful rider fails to adequately address critical elements of California's complex water challenges and will only worsen the effects of the drought. It would also violate existing laws protecting salmon and other endangered fish in California's Bay-Delta estuary.

I am also concerned regarding the other harmful policy riders that would shamefully allow guns on Army Corps of Engineers land and prevent implementation of the administration's Clean Water Rule.

Mr. Chairman, instead of trying to roll back vital environmental protections, we need to be proactive about preserving our environment for the health and safety of future generations. We need to make more investments in clean energy like solar, wind, and geothermal. Unfortunately, this bill does not do that.

I hope that as the process moves forward, these terrible policy riders and low allocations are resolved.

CLARIFYING CONGRESSIONAL INTENT IN PROVIDING FOR DC HOME RULE ACT OF 2016

SPEECH OF

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 25, 2016

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ardently oppose H.R. 5233, wrongfully entitled the "Clarifying Congressional Intent in Providing for DC Home Rule Act of 2016." H.R. 5233 seeks to repeal a District of Columbia referendum, approved by a super-majority of D.C. residents, 83 percent, to allow the local D.C. government to implement its own local budget. To be clear, implement its own local budget after a 30-day congressional review period. This legislation does not preserve the authority of Congress, the 30-day congressional review period already does that, rather it subjects the local D.C. government to the arduous appropriations process to use tax dollars from its own residents.

Why, Mr. Speaker, would we choose to overturn the will of the local D.C. electorate to spend their tax dollars as they choose? Optically, it does not look right. Substantively, it is not right, and, legislatively, we are on the wrong track.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5233 is a move in the wrong direction away from granting the residents of D.C. increased self-determination and home-rule.

ISAAC MONTANO

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2016

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Isaac Montano for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Isaac Montano is a 9th grader at Pomona High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Isaac Montano is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Isaac Montano for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

REMEMBERING THE PALESTINE FLOOD VICTIMS

HON. JEB HENSARLING

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2016

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in somber tone. I wanted to take a moment to remember six lives that were recently lost in Texas' 5th Congressional District.

On April 29th, East Texas experienced a storm system that swept through during the latter part of the day into the evening and night. During the early Saturday morning hours, the city of Palestine in Anderson County, Texas had reports of 7.5 inches of rain that fell in less than an hour. Several homes were destroyed in the neighborhoods, businesses flooded and ultimately lives were changed forever.

I would like to take a moment to remember Lenda Asberry and her great-grandchildren: Jamonicka Johnson, 6, Von Anthony Johnson Jr., 7, Devonte Asberry, 8, and Venetia Asberry, 9. Also, Giovani Olivas, 30, who leaves behind a wife and two children. Spouses, children, parents, aunts, uncles, friends, neighbors, teachers, all left to grieve for these loved ones.

Let us all remember in our thoughts and prayers these families, businesses and the city of Palestine's people as they rebuild their property and lives.

FY17 NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2016

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my disappointment with the way the Majority has undermined the welfare of our troops